

Georgia's Pre-K Program 2011-2012 FAQ for IQ Guide for Assessment Work Sampling System

This document includes information to support programs as they implement Georgia's Pre-K Child Assessment. Use of a common language and definitions ensures that teachers understand the intent and use of all artifacts.

Requirements

What are the titles of the books and other items that are needed to implement Georgia's Pre-K Child Assessment?

- Using Work Sampling Guidelines and Checklists (book)
- Preschool-4 Developmental Guidelines (book)
- Omnibus Guidelines (book)
- Georgia Pre-K Content Standards and Work Sampling System Correlations (available at <http://www.dec.state.ga.us/PreK/PreKChildAssessmentProgram.aspx>)
- A working camera (digital is best)
- Access to a printer
- One hanging file and 8 folders for each child
- One hanging file for Teacher Information
- Matrices (samples can be downloaded at <http://www.dec.state.ga.us/PreK/PreKChildAssessmentProgram.aspx>)

How should my folders be labeled and where should portfolios be kept?

- Personal and Social
- Language and Literacy
- Mathematical Thinking
- Scientific Thinking
- Social Studies
- The Arts
- Physical Health and Development

An eighth folder should be labeled "Progress Reports and Checklist". Portfolios should be accessible and kept in a labeled bin or file box within the classroom

Do the Assessment books need to be kept in with the portfolios or is it acceptable to have them in the classroom as long as they are accessible?

As long as the books are accessible to the teacher and being used, they can be stored wherever is most convenient.

Components

What are appropriate work samples for assessment documentation?

Work samples should be used to document skills demonstrated by individual children such as writing samples, drawings, paintings and dictation. Most work samples can and should serve as documentation for multiple indicators. Samples can also be used to document skills children have yet to develop. You may include work samples from small group if the activities/skills are targeted for specific children's needs.

What are appropriate observational notes for assessment documentation?

Observational notes are meant to be child specific and contain information that is unique to that child such as their exact words or behaviors. Notes should be detailed in order to adequately document as many indicators as possible. For example, if you are documenting that a child "uses expanded vocabulary and language for a variety of purposes" and "speaks clearly" you would need more than a statement that he shared an experience with the group; you would need to quote what the child said including the expanded vocabulary used.

What are appropriate photos for assessment documentation?

The purpose of an assessment photo is to document what a child can do rather than opportunities provided. The best photos are those where you "catch them" in the act rather than posed photos with completed work. Unless you are documenting participation only, group photos of children in a group activity such as a fire truck visit or sitting and listening to a story does not demonstrate the acquisition of any skill/behavior. Photos must include a brief description of the behavior/skill being documented.

What are appropriate matrices for assessment documentation?

Matrices are to be used for easily observable, predictable behaviors/skills that can be assessed without asking the child questions. The reader should be able to clearly tell from the description why a matrix was used as documentation for an indicator. For example, rather than a general statement that the children follow classroom rules, a more appropriate matrix would be that on a certain date, the children clean up after center time. They are especially helpful when introducing/reviewing a skill most children in the Pre-K class can achieve. Matrices are to be developed in advance as part of lesson planning and include the children's names, domain(s) being observed, the date and a description of the predictable skills or behaviors.

Why are the children assessed twice a year? Why not once a year?

Children grow and change at different rates. Their growth often occurs quite rapidly. Only by noting a child's specific performance at one point in time can you accurately assess the child's progress later. We assess twice a year so that the child's profile of skills and knowledge in one collection period can be compared with her profile in an earlier period. This facilitates assessment of progress and provides a chance to record change in performance.

**Why are artifacts labeled with domains and lesson plans activities labeled with content standards?
Why can't these be the same?**

Georgia's Pre-K Content Standards identify what four year olds should know, understand, and be able to do; therefore they are used to plan instruction. The WSS Performance Indicators measure learning on the Content Standards. WSS Performance Standards provide a profile of each child's performance and redirect the teacher back to the corresponding Content Standard for planning.

Should I have all 55 indicators rated by the first preliminary rating period?

No, only those indicators for which you have collected documentation should be rated. A realistic goal would be to have collected documentation to rate a third of the indicators at the end of the first six weeks.

Once I have a rating for a child, am I done with assessing that child for that rating period?

No, the first rating helps establish a baseline and plan what type of activities should be planned next. An indicator rated "Not Yet" lets you know the child may need some prerequisite or basic activities, while a rating of In Process calls for reinforcement and a rating of Proficient would suggest the child is ready for the types of activities suggested for five-year olds in the Omnibus book.

Where do I begin in assessing the children?

Begin with those behaviors/skills that are easily observable. Some of the Indicators in the Personal/Social, Language and Literacy (Speaking and Listening) and Physical Development and Health domains can be assessed the first weeks of school.

How can I ensure all 55 indicators are rated during a rating period?

Child assessment should be purposeful, not accidental. Teachers should collect one type of assessment documentation (photos, work samples, matrices, observational notes) each day. For example, the teacher might take photos outside one day for Physical Development and Health, use a matrix another day during group music, collect work samples of children's artistic responses to a story they have heard in small group, and record observational notes another day during center time focusing on Personal and social indicators. Later in the rating period, the teacher can look for those indicators that have yet to be rated for many of the children and plan activities where data can be collected.

How can I document a child as "Not Yet", when I cannot document anything negative?

There is a difference between being negative and factual. Notes should record what you saw and what you heard (the facts) without judgment. An example of a factual note would be, "When asked to come to circle time, Emma stomped her foot and said, "No!", whereas a negative note would be "Emma refused to come to circle time."

Is the WSS spreadsheet required and if it is used, does it replace the checklists?

The spreadsheet for assessment (can be found at <http://www.dec.state.ga.us/PreK/PreKChildAssessmentProgram.aspx>) was developed to provide a more systematic way to rate all children on the 55 indicators listed on the checklist. If a teacher uses the spreadsheet, then the individual checklist for each child would only be used for the final Fall rating and the final Spring rating prior to conferences

Progress Reports and Conferences

Where can I find progress reports used for parent conferences?

Progress reports are only available on the DECAL website. They will not be sent to programs this year. You can access the template at <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/Prek/PreKChildAssessmentProgram.aspx>. You will still receive your Developmental Checklists via mail.

How do I decide between “as expected” or “needs development” on the progress report?

- Count the total number of performance indicators under the domain. (subtract any NA ratings)
- Count the number of Not Yet ratings
- Count the number of In Process ratings
- Count the number of Proficient ratings
- Add the number of In Process and Proficient ratings. If more than half of the indicators are Not Yet the Process Report rating for that domain would be Needs Development
- If most of the checklist ratings are In Process and/or Proficient the Progress Report rating would be As Expected

How detailed should the progress report comments be? Are more than one or two lines needed?

You want to be specific using the child’s name and give examples. Be descriptive and paint a clear picture of the child’s level of performance. Be positive and use language that is respectful of children and families.

What if I set up parent teacher conferences and the parents don’t show? What do I do?

You will want to document that the parent did not attend the conference and try to reschedule. After several attempts you can request a phone conference. If they still do not accept you may send the progress report home by certified mail and state this on the parent signature line.

Can I hold conferences at the same time as the county where I teach to make it easier for families?

Conferences for GA Pre-K classes should be held at the end of each rating period. Teachers need the entire rating period in between conferences to assess children. In many cases, the dates will not line up with your counties dates for their conferences. You may also need to hold them over the course of a couple of days and offer times to parents during planning time, nap time, etc. to be able to meet with everyone.